

Reading Spanish Handwritten Records

Spanish “How to” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you how to access a variety of aids that will help you learn to Spanish handwritten records. This guide is not designed to teach you how to read Spanish handwritten records but to acquaint you with resources that are already available to teach you.

INTRODUCTION

Reading Spanish handwritten records can be challenging, but there are many resources that have been created that can make it easier. To make best use of these guides and resources, click on each of the links. Read through the material and find the guide that best suits your needs and learning style.

HOW TO

Click on one of the following links.

- [Spanish Script Tutorial](#) – This website is created by BYU's Center for Family History. With help of faculty and students, this website is now available to those learning to read script in order to decipher handwriting in genealogical documents. This website includes charts, lessons, documents and tests.
- [Reading Spanish Handwritten Records](#) – This is a series of three interactive video lessons designed to familiarize you with the letters in the Spanish alphabet, and to aid you in the recognition of dates, key words, and names. The videos explore several types of genealogical records, including records of birth, baptism, marriage, and death.
- [Reading Spanish Handwriting](#) - This class will help you learn the basics of reading Spanish handwritten records. You can then use your new skills to read the records of your Hispanic ancestors or participate in the efforts of FamilySearch to index records from around the world by indexing records in Spanish.
- [Spanish Records Extraction Guide](#) – This guide provides basic instructions, samples, and activities to help you identify the various parts and characteristics of Spanish baptism and marriage records. This version of the guide is divided into chapters. To enjoy the full benefits of the vast knowledge this guide teaches, study the guide chapter by chapter.
- [Language Resources and Handwriting Helps](#) – This page will lead you to basic information and links as provided by FamilySearch to indexers of Spanish records.
- [Spanish Paleography Tool](#) – This tool is for more advanced users. Created by the Dominican Studies Institute of the City College of New York, this tool allows you to view a document and its transcription, compare words and letters, and become more familiar with the script styles of Cortesana, Procesal, and Humanistica Cursiva.

PRACTICE

Go to the [Spanish Script Tutorial](https://script.byu.edu/Pages/Spanish/en/welcome.aspx) site by clicking on the name of the site. The actual web address is: <https://script.byu.edu/Pages/Spanish/en/welcome.aspx>. You may want to bookmark this site on your personal computer for future reference.

Explore each of the following tabs on the left side of the page.

Techniques & Tools

By clicking on the Techniques & Tools heading, a list of topics will appear. You now have the option to click on various subcategories, which include the following:

- Overview
- Language
- Seven Practical Suggestions
- Latin Influence
- Abbreviations
- Numbers
- List Of Surnames
- List Of Given Names
- Genealogical Glossary
- Bibliography

Alphabet

This heading contains three categories where you can learn about Spanish handwriting and the Spanish alphabet. There is also a section showing alphabet charts and various ways each letter might be written.

Documents

This heading contains samples of various types of records along with a definition of the record type and how it is used. The site is under construction; therefore, you may find that some record types are lacking such as emigration, municipal, and military records which were missing at the time this guide was created.

Interactive Exercises

The interactive exercises are short tests that you can do to assess your knowledge of letters, words (most often given names), and passages in documents. These exercises will help you assess your strengths and weaknesses in reading Spanish script.

Additional Resources

This section contains information and links to various geographical dictionaries or gazetteers for Spanish speaking countries. These can be helpful in trying to decipher the name of a locality. There is also a link to the Spanish Records Extraction Guide mentioned above.

Further information

After you've deciphered the handwriting, use the following resources to help determine the meaning of the words:

- [Spanish Genealogical Word List](#) – This FamilySearch Wiki article provides a basic list of words, numbers, and other elementary vocabulary that you might find in a Spanish birth, baptism, marriage, or death record.
- [Google Translate](#) – This online machine translation is used to give a basic translation. On the left side of the page, choose the language of the word or words you wish to translate using the drop-down menu next to the words **Detect language**. In this case, you would choose Spanish. On the right side of the page, choose the language you wish the translation to appear in. In this case choose English.

Type the Spanish word or phrase in the box on the left side of the page and the translation will appear in the box on the right side of the page. You must spell the word or words correctly to get an accurate translation. The site may offer you possible suggestions if no translation is found.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this “How to” Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you’ve mastered the Guide! [Click here](#) to try out the Activity.